Academic Performance Index (API)

The API	The Academic Performance Index (API) is the cornerstone of California's Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA). The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. It is a numeric index (or scale) that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. A school's score or placement on the API is an indicator of a school's performance level. The interim statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. A school's growth is measured by how well it is moving toward that goal.
Performance Indicators Included	A school's base year API is subtracted from its growth API to determine how much the school grew in a year. The indicators used for both the base API and growth API are the same, and the APIs are calculated in the same way, as reflected in an API reporting cycle. Currently, the 1999 and 2000 base year APIs include only the results of the Stanford 9, Form T, which is administered in the spring of each year as part of the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. In addition to the STAR results, other indicators of a school's academic performance will be added to the API as soon as they are available. These indicators will include results such as the California Standards Tests, that are part of the STAR program, and the High School Exit Examination and graduation and attendance rates. The English-Language Arts Standards Test is anticipated to be added to the 2001 base API. The law requires that test results make up at least 60 percent of the API.
Calculation	To calculate the 1999 or 2000 base year API, individual student scores in each subject area on the 1999 or 2000 Stanford 9 test are combined into a single number to represent the performance of a school. The national percentile rank (NPR) for each student tested is used to make the calculation. The percentages of students scoring within each of five NPR performance levels (called performance bands) are weighted and combined to produce a summary result for each content area. Summary results for content areas are then weighted and combined to produce a single number between 200 and 1000. This single number represents the school's API score.
Weights Given to Each Content Area	In grades 2-8, the weights given to each content area measured in the 1999 and 2000 base year API calculations are: mathematics, 40%; reading, 30%; language, 15%; and spelling, 15%. In grades 9-11, the weights given are: mathematics, 20%; reading, 20%; language, 20%; history-social science, 20%; and science, 20%.
Interim Statewide API Performance Target	The PSAA requires that the State Board of Education (SBE) adopt a statewide API performance target upon approval of state performance standards. The SBE has adopted an interim statewide API performance target of 800. This target reflects a high level of performance that schools should strive to meet.
Schools Receiving an API	Most but not all schools receive API ranks and growth targets beginning in 1999. The API and annual growth targets are calculated for elementary, middle, and high schools, including charter schools, that have 100 or more students with valid test scores on the Stanford 9. Schools with between 11 to 99 valid test scores receive an API with an asterisk to designate the larger statistical uncertainty of an API based on fewer than 100 valid test scores. Schools with fewer than 11 valid scores and schools serving non-traditional student populations participate in an alternative accountability system. Only scores for students enrolled in the district during the previous school year are included in the API.
How the API is Used	If a school meets participation and API growth criteria, it may be eligible to receive monetary awards through the Governor's Performance Award and Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act award programs. If a school is ranked in the bottom half of the statewide distribution and does not meet or exceed its growth targets, it may be identified for participation in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).